

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 7, 12, and 21-24 without prejudice to or disclaimer of their subject matter. Please AMEND claims 1-6, 8, 9, 14, 18, and 20, and ADD claims 25-28, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device comprising:
  - a plurality of sheet trays which are vertically disposed for storing sheets;
  - a plurality of sheet feeding means for respectively feeding sheets stored in the plurality of sheet trays; and
    - a plurality of transport paths for respectively transporting the sheets fed by the plurality of sheet feeding means,
      - a primary transport path into which the plurality of transport paths flow,
      - wherein a sheet feeding direction of sheets fed from ~~stored on at least~~ one of the plurality of sheet trays by one of the plurality of sheet feeding means is a direction opposite to a sheet feeding direction of sheets fed from ~~stored on the other~~ another of the plurality of sheets sheet trays by the other sheet feeding means, and
        - a sheet transport direction of the sheet which is transported from one of said plurality of transport paths into said primary transport path at an interflow position and a sheet transport direction of the sheet which is transported from the other transport paths into said primary transport path at an interflow position are the same.

2. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device according to Claim 1,  
further comprising:  
a primary transport path into which the plurality of transport paths interflow;  
wherein the primary transport path is disposed between two of the plurality of  
sheet trays.

3. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device according to Claim 1,  
further comprising:  
a primary transport path into which the plurality of transport paths interflow;  
wherein the primary transport path includes sheet reversing means for  
reversing front and back sides of sheets.

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device according to Claim 1,  
wherein the sheet feeding means feeds sheets from the sheet trays to insert the sheets between  
two of a plurality of sheets transported from the an image formation apparatus.

5. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device comprising:  
a sheet tray for storing sheets;  
two sheet feeding means for feeding sheets stored on the sheet trays; and  
two transport paths for respectively transporting sheets fed by said two sheet  
feeding means~~[,]~~; and  
a primary transport path into which said two transport paths flow,

wherein each of said two sheet feeding means feeds sheets from the sheet tray in a direction opposite to the other, another:

a sheet transport direction of the sheet which is transported from one of said two sheet transport paths into said primary transport path at an interflow position and a sheet transport direction of a sheet which is transported from the other transport path into said primary transport path at an interflow position are the same direction.

6. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device according to Claim 5, wherein said sheet feeding means feeds sheets from the sheet tray and inserts the sheets between a plurality of sheets transported from the image formation apparatus.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device comprising:  
a pair of feeding trays which are vertically disposed;  
a pair of sheet feeding units, each disposed adjacent a respective one of the pair of sheet feeding trays; and

a pair of transport paths respectively connected to the pair of sheet feeding units[,]; and

a primary transport path into which said pair of transport paths flow,  
wherein a sheet feeding direction of each of the pair of sheet feeding units is opposite to the other of the pair of sheet feeding units, and

a sheet transport direction of the sheet which is transported from one of said pair of sheet transport paths into said primary transport path at an interflow position and a sheet transport direction of a sheet which is transported from the other transport path into said primary transport path at an interflow position are the same direction.

9. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding device comprising:

a feeding tray;

a pair of sheet feeding units, each disposed adjacent the feeding tray; and

a pair of transport paths respectively connected to the pair of sheet feeding units[[,]]; and

a primary transport path into which said pair of transport paths flow,

wherein a sheet feeding direction of each of the pair of sheet feeding units is opposite to the other of said pair of sheet feeding units[[.]], and

a sheet transport direction of the sheet which is transported from one of said pair of sheet transport paths into said primary transport path at an interflow position and a sheet transport direction of a sheet which is transported from the other transport path into said primary transport path at an interflow position are the same direction.

10. (Previously Presented) A sheet post-processing system comprising:

a sheet feeding device according to Claim 1; and

a sheet post-processing device adapted to perform post-processing on sheets discharged from the sheet feeding device.

11. (Previously Presented) A sheet post-processing system comprising:  
a sheet feeding device according to Claim 5; and  
a sheet post-processing device adapted to perform post-processing on sheets  
discharged from the sheet feeding device.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) An image formation system comprising:  
an image formation apparatus for forming images on sheets;  
a sheet feeding device according to Claim 1 for inserting sheets between two of  
a plurality of sheets on which images are formed by the image formation apparatus; and  
a sheet post-processing device which is disposed downstream in a sheet  
transport direction of said image formation apparatus, said sheet post-processing device  
performing post-processing on sheets on which images are formed by the image formation  
apparatus or on sheets fed by the sheet feeding device.

14. (Currently Amended) An image formation system according to Claim  
13, further comprising:

control means for selecting feeding of sheets a sheet feeding means from the  
plurality of sheet trays feeding means depending on whether the selected post-processing mode is  
a post-processing mode in which sheets are transported in a face-up state to the sheet post-

processing device or a post-processing mode in which sheets are transported in a face-down state to the sheet post-processing device.

15. (Previously Presented) An image formation system according to Claim 13, wherein the sheet feeding device is detachably mounted on one of the image formation apparatus and the sheet post-processing device.

16. (Previously Presented) An image formation system according to Claim 13, further comprising:

an upstream side sheet feeding device located on an upstream side in the sheet feeding direction of the image formation apparatus for feeding sheets to the image formation apparatus,

wherein said upstream side sheet feeding device and said sheet feeding device have the same configuration.

17. (Previously Presented) An image formation system comprising:  
an image formation apparatus for forming images on sheets;  
a sheet feeding device according to Claim 5 for inserting sheets between two of a plurality of sheets on which images are formed by the image formation apparatus; and  
a sheet post-processing device disposed downstream in the sheet transport direction of said image formation apparatus, said sheet post-processing device performing post-

processing on sheets on which images are formed by the image formation apparatus or on sheets fed by the sheet feeding device.

18. (Currently Amended) An image formation system according to Claim 17, further comprising:

control means for selecting ~~feeding of sheets~~ a sheet feeding means from the two sheet feeding means to feed sheets from the sheet tray depending on whether the selected post-processing mode is a post-processing mode in which sheets are transported in a face-up state or a post-processing mode in which sheets are transported in a face-down state.

19. (Previously Presented) An image formation system according to Claim 17, wherein the sheet feeding device is detachably mounted on one of the image formation apparatus and the sheet post-processing device.

20. (Previously Presented) An image formation system according to Claim 17, further comprising:

an upstream side sheet feeding device located on an upstream side in the sheet feeding direction of the image formation apparatus for feeding sheets to the image formation apparatus,

wherein said upstream side sheet feeding device and said sheet feeding device have the same configuration.

21-24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) A sheet feeding device according to claim 1, further comprising control means for selecting a sheet feeding means from the plurality of sheet feeding means depending on whether sheets are transported in a face-up state on said primary transport path or in a face-down state on said primary transport path.

26. (New) A sheet feeding device according to claim 5, further comprising control means for selecting a sheet feeding means from said two sheet feeding means depending on whether sheets are transported in a face-up state on said primary transport path or in a face-down state on said primary transport path.

27. (New) A sheet feeding device according to claim 8, further comprising control means for selecting a sheet feeding means from said pair of sheet feeding means depending on whether sheets are transported in face-up state on said primary transport path or in a face-down state on said primary transport path.

28. (New) A sheet feeding device according to claim 9, further comprising control means for selecting a sheet feeding means from said pair of sheet feeding units depending on whether sheets are transported in a face-up state on said primary transport path or in a face-down state on said primary transport path.